



SR1824

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The State of Illinois has been a strong proponent for necessary reforms to the criminal justice system and an advocate for successful re-entry of returning citizens to their communities; and

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WHEREAS, The prison population is disproportionately comprised of African-American and Latino persons, with one in every 13 African-American males in the United States aged 30 to 34 incarcerated or imprisoned in 2011 and one in 36 Latino males incarcerated; by comparison, one in every 90 white males of the same age group were incarcerated; and

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WHEREAS, African-American and Latino women were 2.5 times more likely and 1.4 times more likely respectively, to be incarcerated than their white counterparts; and

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WHEREAS, The expenses of incarceration account for a substantial amount of almost every state's budget, an expense which is ultimately borne by a state's taxpayers; and

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WHEREAS, According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, more than half of those incarcerated in the United States have mental health issues; mentally-ill incarcerated or imprisoned adults are also disproportionately abused, beaten, and raped;

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1 and

2 WHEREAS, Enhanced mental health training for law
3 enforcement personnel and the use of diversion programs will
4 reduce arrest rates by de-escalating mental health crisis
5 situations; and

6 WHEREAS, Effectively treating inmates' physical and mental
7 health illnesses improves their well-being and can reduce the
8 likelihood that their condition will deteriorate, that they
9 will commit new crimes, violate their parole, or return to
10 prison; and

11 WHEREAS, The ability of offenders with serious mental
12 illness to obtain appropriate health care services upon release
13 from prison is essential to reducing recidivism rates; and

14 WHEREAS, Prisoners with serious mental illness who have
15 their Medicaid coverage canceled rather than suspended upon
16 incarceration face delays in access to essential health care
17 benefits upon their release of two to three months; and

18 WHEREAS, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
19 encourages states to suspend rather than terminate Medicaid
20 eligibility to limit long delays in accessing health care
21 benefits and services upon release from prison; therefore, be

1 it

2 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL
3 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge all federal,
4 State, and county legislators and officials to consider and
5 enact policies to enhance access to mental health services at
6 multiple levels in the criminal justice system which will
7 create better results for both the individual and the system;
8 and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That we support a wide range of programs to
10 improve mental health treatment for individuals involved in the
11 criminal justice system aimed to aid communities to end
12 recidivism; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That we urge the law enforcement community to
14 consider the integration of mental health treatment and
15 services such as crisis intervention teams into the criminal
16 justice system spectrum, in an effort to address mental health
17 crisis situations and to reduce arrest rates; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That we call upon all states and the federal
19 government to examine the costs and benefits of suspending
20 Medicaid coverage instead of termination of coverage for
21 individuals in the criminal justice system and to allow
22 Medicaid coverage to be suspended for incarcerated persons

1 instead of being terminated; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That we call upon the states and the federal
3 government to consider promising criminal justice
4 interventions and policies for mentally-ill offenders such as
5 diversion programs and mental health courts to send seriously
6 mentally ill offenders to community-based mental health
7 treatment programs instead of prison or jail; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be delivered to
9 the President and Vice President of the United States, the
10 members of the Illinois congressional delegation, and other
11 federal and state government officials and agencies as
12 appropriate.